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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/696,806	10/25/2000	Lisa M. Palmer	014208.1339	3178

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EXAMINER

MCCLELLAN, JAMES S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3627

DATE MAILED: 02/17/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/696,806

Applicant(s)

PALMER ET AL.

Examiner

James S McClellan

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MW

-- Th MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 December 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-12 and 15-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-12 and 15-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Amendment

1. Applicant's submittal of an amendment was entered on December 11, 2003, wherein:
claims 1, 4-12, and 15-22 are pending and
claims 1, 4, 12, and 15 have been amended.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 1, 5-10, 12, and 16-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,058,380 (Anderson et al.).

Regarding **claim 1**, Anderson et al. discloses a method for organizing vendor information comprising: receiving data comprising a plurality of accounts payable items, each accounts payable item having an associated vendor name (see column 12, line 63, "vendor name"), the vendor name representing a business associated with a purchase transaction represented by the accounts payable item, wherein ones of the accounts payable items are associated with a first inventor name; and associating a first vendor identifier (see column 12, line 64, "vendor identification number") and a second vendor identifier (see column 12, lines 64-66, "vendor

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type”) using a computer with ones of the accounts payable items associated with the first vendor name; the first vendor identifier (see column 12, line 64, “vendor identification number”) uniquely identifies a single vendor associated with the first vendor name; and the second vendor identifier (see column 12, lines 64-66, “vendor type”) indicates a relationship between the first vendor and a second vendor; **[claim 5]** the first vendor identifier (see column 12, line 64, “vendor identification number”) and second vendor identifier (see column 12, lines 64-66, “vendor type”) are associated with ones of the items in response to the first vendor name; **[claim 6]** maintaining a database (see column 12, lines 53-58, “database 66”) associating one or more vendor identifiers with the first vendor name; **[claim 7]** the database (see column 12, lines 53-58, “database 66”) was at least partially created in response to a database describing relationships between a plurality of vendor names (vendors are associated by vendor type); **[claim 8]** the database was created at least partially in response to relationships between vendors defined by a user of computer software associated with the database (vendors are associated by vendor type); **[claim 9]** associating a plurality of vendor identifiers with a vendor group (vendors are associated by vendor type); and **[claim 10]** the vendor group comprises a plurality of vendors with a common characteristic selected from the group consisting of an industry (see column 12, lines 65-66, “vendor type, e.g., gas, electric, telephone...”), a product, an ownership relationship, a strategic alliance, and a joint venture.

Regarding **claim 12**, Anderson et al. discloses a system for organizing vendor information as required by the method of claim 1 described above in detail. Dependent **claims 13-21** are similar to claims 2-10 as set forth above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 4, 11, 15, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,926,810 (Noble et al.).

Regarding **claims 4, 11, 15, and 22**, Anderson et al. fails to disclose a vendor identifier that indicates the relationship between vendors based on a subsidiary, joint venture, partnership, or an ownership relationship.

Noble et al. teaches adding a vendor identifier that indicates the relationship between vendors based on a subsidiary (see column 11, lines 1-24), joint venture, partnership, or an ownership relationship.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Anderson et al. with vendor identifier as taught by Noble et al., because distinguishing between subsidiaries allows an entity to better organize their databases with more specific information which allows more detailed analysis of the state of the entity.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed December 12, 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

On page 6, under "Section 112 Rejections", Applicant notes that claims 2 and 13 have been cancelled so the objection is moot. The Examiner acknowledges that claims 2 and 13 have been canceled and notes that the prior office action merely objected to claims 2 and 13. The prior office action did not include a 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection as indicated in Applicant's remarks.

On page 6, final paragraph, Applicant argues that Anderson does not teach multiple limitations as set forth in amended claims 1 and 12. More specifically, Applicant argues that Anderson does not teach associating both (a) a first vendor identifier with ones of account payable items wherein the first vendor identifier uniquely identifies a first vendor associated with a first vendor name and (b) a second vendor identifier with ones of accounts payable items wherein the second vendor identifier indicates a relationship between the first vendor and a second vendor. The Examiner respectfully disagrees. Anderson discloses a system that permits an intermediary having EDI capabilities to electronically process vendor invoice information on behalf of a customer that does not have EDI capabilities. The intermediary sets up an accounts payable format (beginning in column 11, line 37) and a vendor list (beginning in column 12, line 49) for each customer. Inherently, each accounts payable item is associated with a specific vendor. Each vendor account includes specific information that defines the vendor including: vendor name, vendor identification number, and vendor type. Therefore, Anderson discloses associating both (a) a first vendor identifier (see column 12, line 64, "vendor identification") with ones of account payable items (as set forth above, it is inherent that each accounts payable item is associated with a vendor) wherein the first vendor identifier uniquely identifies a first vendor with the first vendor name (see column 12, line 63, "vendor name") and (b) a second

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vendor identifier (see column 12, lines 64-66, "vendor type") with ones of accounts payable items wherein the second vendor identifier ("vendor type") indicates a relationship between the first vendor and a second vendor (for example, a second vendor identifier of "gas" indicates that both vendors are in the same industry). Secondly, Applicant argues that Anderson does not teach "associating" identifiers with accounts payable items. The Examiner respectfully disagrees.

Figure 1, clearly shows that vendor setup information (step 36) is entered into the intermediary database (66) and the Accounts Payable generator (78) is also connected to the intermediary database (66). Therefore, the vendor information (name, ID, type) is "associated" with account payable items.

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

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8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jim McClellan whose telephone number is (703) 305-0212. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9:30 to 6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Olszewski, can be reached at (703) 308-5183.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

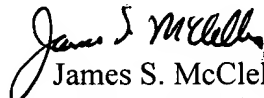
Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patent and Trademarks
Washington D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

(703) 872-9306 (Official communications) or
(703) 746-3516 (Informal/Draft communications).

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive,
Arlington, VA, 7th floor receptionist.


James S. McClellan
Primary Examiner
A.U. 3627

jsm
February 11, 2004